



Protein: Quality Counts

Your body needs amino acids to repair and build muscles, keep your immune system strong, make hormones and enzymes, and for energy. So where do you get these amino acids? From protein in the food you eat. That's why protein is an essential part of an athlete's diet. If you are training hard, you may need about 0.68 grams for every pound you weigh – twice as much protein every day as an average person. Not only is getting enough protein important, the quality of protein is important too.

High quality protein is generally animal protein. Animal protein contains all of the amino acids that your body can't make on its own. Research shows that many athletes don't get enough high quality protein.

The table below shows about how much high quality protein you should be eating.

If you weigh (pounds)	Your goal (grams of protein)	If you weigh (pounds)	Your goal (grams of protein)
100	46	160	73
110	50	165	75
115	52	170	77
120	55	175	80
125	57	180	82
130	59	190	86
135	61	200	91
140	64	210	95
145	66	220	100
150	68	230	105
155	70	240	109

See if you are getting enough by filling in the tables on the other side of this page.

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How many servings of the following foods do you eat each day?

	Serving Size	How many servings you eat a day
Beef	3 oz	_____
Chicken	3 oz	_____
Turkey	3 oz	_____
Pork	3 oz	_____
Fish	3 oz	_____
TOTAL SERVINGS		_____

$\times 25 =$ _____

3 oz is about the size of a deck of cards or a woman's palm.

	Serving Size	How many servings you eat a day
Milk	1 cup	_____
Cheese	1 oz	_____
Yogurt	1 cup	_____
Cottage Cheese	1/4 cup	_____
Egg	1 whole	_____
TOTAL SERVINGS		_____

$\times 7 =$ _____

YOUR DAILY TOTAL _____ grams of high quality protein

Now, compare your total to your goal from the other side.

If your total is well below your goal, you may benefit from eating more high quality protein. If your total is close to your goal, you are probably getting all of the amino acids you need. If your total is well above your goal, you may be getting more than you need. The extra protein will be used for energy or stored as body fat.

Your eating habits may change based on the season, your schedule, and your training. Recheck your protein intake periodically to see whether you are getting all of the amino acids your body needs.

